AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Applicants respectfully request that the following amendments to the specifications be entered. No new matter is added by these amendments and they are requested merely to correct typographical errors, and to provide conformance of the specification to the drawings as originally filed.

1. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 4, lines 15- 21, with the following, to correct grammar and typographical errors.

An object of the present invention is to provide a system and method for assisting the customer in finding the optimal set of products and/or services based on the customer's business profile. Customers are asked a series of questions that provide a general profile of their business, and the system and method of the present invention use this information to recommend the necessary commodity types the customer should consider for purchase and to generate the optimal set of commodity options that best [[meet]] meets the needs of the customers. As a result, customers save time and money and find the best products/services that [[meets]] meet their needs.

2. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 5, lines 15- 22, with the following, to correct grammar and typographical errors.

In another aspect, the present invention provides a system for assisting a customer in choosing between commodity types, comprising an optimizer device that is connected to a network; a customer device for connecting to the optimizer device via the network and sending business requirement information to the optimizer device, wherein the optimizer device includes at least one database that contains information about at least one commodity type, at least one utility function, and at least one business profile for the customer [[,]] ; and a processing component for presenting to the customer a list of commodity types containing at least one commodity type based on the business profile for the customer and the utility function for the commodity type.

3. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 7, lines 10- 11, with the following, to bring the specification into conformance with drawings Fig. 10A and Fig. 10B.

Fig. 9 is a flow chart depicting an adjustment process of the present invention; and Fig. 10A-B [[is]] are [[a]] flow charts depicting the business profile process of the present invention.

4. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 12, line 21 through page 13 line 8, with the following, to bring the specification into conformance with itself per page 12 Line 14 through Line 16 and further with drawings Fig. 3 and Fig. 4.

Fig. 5 shows a second implementation and is similar to Fig. 4 with the exception of the optimizer device 300. In Fig. 5, the optimizer device 300 consists of three servers, instead of one. Moreover, these three servers may be connected to each other, for example in a Local Area Network (LAN). More servers assist in load balancing and keep customers from getting frustrated. The web server component 310 and the processing component 320 may run on Server 1 and other components of the optimizer device 300, such as the customer database 330, commodity database 340, optimization database 350, [[and]] decision rules database 360, and the processing component 320 may run on Servers 2 or 3. Depending on the amount of traffic to the web site, more servers may be added if needed. The present invention is not limited to the above examples. Other implementation configurations will be known to those skilled in the art, and are within the scope of the present invention.

5. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 13, lines 9-20, with the following, to correct grammar and typographical errors and to further bring the specification into conformance with drawing Fig. 6.

The operation of the system will be described now with reference to Figs. 6-10B. In step 805 of Fig. 6, the customer uses the customer device 100 to visit the web site hosted by the web server component 310. For example, the customer may use the browser 110, such as Netscape Navigator, to visit the web site. When a business customer visits the web site, he is preferably presented with the choice of building a customer profile, or going directly to the optimization

process. If the customer is a new user to the system, the customer is asked to enter personal information, such as name, address, e-mail, address, and a password for future visits to the site, as indicated by step 817. Once the customer provides this information, the system creates an account for the customer. Alternatively, if the customer already has an account with the system, the system asks the customer for a user name and password at step [[619]] 819. The account information may be stored in the customer database 330. Other customer authentication schemes known to those skilled in the art may be used and are within the scope of the present invention.

6. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 13, lines 21 through page 14 line 12, with the following, to correct grammar and to make the specification conform to the drawings Fig. 10A-B.

Once the customer is authenticated, the system inquires if the customer wishes to build a business profile or begin the optimization process with known categories. This is shown in step 822. As may be typical with a start-up company, or a company using the inventive system for the first time, the customer may be unsure of its business requirements. For example, the customer may not actually know what commodities it needs, their preferences for attributes of any commodities, or how to weigh what preferences it may have. In this situation, the customer will use the inventive system to build a business profile that will enable the system to identify which products and services the customer needs and ultimately optimize them. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, as shown in Fig. 10A-B, the customer requests the system to build a business profile, at step 1000. The system proceeds to ask the customer a series of questions that will establish a general profile of the business. For example, the customer is asked its type of business in step 1010. Based upon the answer (such as the business is retail, manufacturing, financial services, etc.), the system will search the decision rules database 360 and present a series of follow-up questions about the business.

7. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 15, lines 17- 20, with the following, to make the specification conform to drawings Fig.10A-B.

Once the customer answers all the questions presented by the system, the profiling information is stored in decision rules database 360. Then design rules are applied to the information stored in decision rules database 360 (step 1030). The inventive system will determine areas in which the customer will be able to optimize service, and presents these areas to the customer at step 1040.

8. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 16, lines 6-8, with the following, to correct a typographical error.

For example, a start-up e-commerce business selects an office location, has 6 employees and no ~~exiting~~ existing infrastructure. Based upon the questions presented by the decision tree of the inventive system, the general profile of the customer's business is:

9. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 16, line 10, with the following, to correct a typographical error.

[[Min]] Main Location – 111 Smith Road, Jonesboro, PA, 19999

10. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 18, lines 15-20, with the following, to correct a typographical error.

The business requirement information and business rules can be used to pre-populate the optimizer input profiles at step 1080. For example, knowing how many employees the business has, the number of shared wireless users can be pre-selected in the wireless optimizer input ~~profiled~~ profiles as a convenience to the user. The business rules are stored in the business rules database and can be updated as additional solution sets become known for given business types and new technologies become available in product and service categories of interest.

11. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 20, lines 9-18, with the following, to make use of consistent references in the figures, to make the specification conform to drawings Fig.10A-B, and to correct spelling errors.

As shown in steps 840, 845, 850, and 855 of ~~Figure~~ Fig. 6, the system queries the commodity database to find the eligible commodities that meet the customer's hard requirements that were entered in step 825 or were determined by the business profile system, shown in Fig 10A-B. For example, if a customer shopping for an ISP plan has a hard requirement of at least two e-mail accounts, only ISP plans serving the customer's geographic area and providing at least two e-mail accounts are considered by the system to be "eligible". Geographic area can be determined through ~~Zipcodes~~ Zip codes, area codes and exchanges, or any other method known to those skilled in the art. If a particular commodity does not match the hard requirements, the commodity is discarded as a choice for the customer. Alternatively, if a particular commodity meets the customer's hard requirements, the system identifies the commodity as eligible.

12. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 22, line 2-5 with the following, to make the specification conform to the drawing Fig. 6.

Next, in steps 860 and 865, the system retrieves the estimated cost equations from the optimization database 350 and calculates the estimated costs for all the eligible commodities. For example, in the case of the ISP plans, the effective cost calculation may be expressed in terms of the estimated monthly cost (EMC):

13. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 23, line 17 through page 24 line 10, with the following, to correct typographical and spelling errors.

Next, in step 620, the range for each parameter is identified. For example, in the case of connection speed of an ISP plan, the range may be from less than 33 [[kpbs]] Kbps to 1500 [[kpbs]] Kbps. Once the ranges are identified, the utility functions may be calculated by using regression analysis, engineering ~~judgement~~ judgment, or a combination of both, as shown in steps 630, 635, 640, 645, and 650. If regression analysis is used, a random set of customers may be sampled to obtain a quantitative value, usually a dollar value, associated with that particular parameter, as shown in step 635. For example, in the case of an ISP plan, a survey like the one shown in Fig. 8 may be sent to ISP customers. The dollar values may be then used to calculate a best-fit utility

function via regression analysis, as shown in step 645. Alternatively, the utility function may be calculated using engineering judgment, or a combination of regression analysis and engineering judgment, as shown in step 640. For example, engineering ~~judgement~~ judgment may be used to adjust the utility function obtained through regression analysis. If needed, steps 630, 635, 640, and 645 may be repeated to calculate the utility functions for all of the key parameters associated with each commodity, as shown in step 650. The utility functions may be calculated for a generalized sample group or for specific sample groups based on demographics, for example age, income, household size, and spending. Moreover, the spending may be based on the estimated costs.

14. Please replace the paragraph of the specification on page 27, lines 7-13, with the following, to make the specification conform to the drawing Fig. 9.

Once the effective cost is calculated, the commodities are ranked based on minimum effective cost, as indicated by step 955. The highest ranked commodities are presented to the customer, as indicated by step [[965]] 960. For example, Plan 2 will be the highest ranked plan in the ISP case. Next, the customer selects the commodity that the customer wants to purchase and the system processes the request, as indicated by step 965. Now, the customer has the option of either ending the session, such as by exiting the browser, or can repeat this process for another commodity category, as indicated by steps 970, 975, and branch C.